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Sent: Monday, April 12, 2010 1:19 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge Replacement & HOV Project
Subject: SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program Feedback

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Comments:

I oppose the DoT's plan for 520. It is astonishing to me that with all the various comments about the project, so few people are zeroing in on the fact that there is no plan as to how to pay for it. ANY other project being proposed for the region would need to have a full financing plan in place first. This is entirely irresponsible, but it is in keeping with the tone and tenor of the entire project. The world is finally turning against big 50's-style highway projects for many reasons, yet the DoT has planned the biggest possible highway it could ever imagine stuffing down Seattle's throat, which it seems to be quite successfully doing right now. I'd prefer to see the DoT prioritize security-only by looking for temporary measures that could retrofit the bridge for safety during storms and earthquakes. Thanks for your time, Ed Newbold

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The project is needed to address safety issues and the vulnerability of the existing bridge to earthquakes and severe winds. Retrofitting the Evergreen Point Bridge and bridge approach structures to address these issues was not determined to be a viable option under the No Build Alternative or separately. The bridge has had a number of safety and maintenance retrofits to date and further retrofits are not feasible due to structural and pontoon floatation limitations. Hollow columns support the west approach to the Evergreen Point Bridge, the Portage Bay Bridge, and on- and off-ramps in Montlake and the Arboretum. These columns are vulnerable to damage from earthquakes and could not be effectively retrofitted to accepted seismic protection levels.

The existing bridge also does not have adequate shoulder or lane width to meet established standards that protect the safety of drivers, as regulated by FHWA and the Association of American State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Improved shoulders would also result in improved traffic operations in the SR 520 corridor. The project would also complete the HOV lane system in the corridor, improving reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, and creating incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone. The project would not add general-purpose lanes. The Preferred Alternative evaluated in this Final EIS has been designed to minimize SR 520's footprint as much as possible while allowing room for HOV lanes and the shoulders required to satisfy current safety standards regulated by FHWA and the Association of American State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative).

As described in Chapter 1 of the SDEIS and in the Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated Report (Attachment 8 to the SDEIS), an extensive range of alternatives has been evaluated for this project. Alternative corridors, technologies (e.g. tubes and tunnels), and travel

modes, as well as many design variations within the existing corridor, were evaluated as part of the Trans-Lake Washington Study and again after the initiation of NEPA review in 2000. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS provides additional information on how alternatives were developed and evaluated, and why some solutions were determined not to be reasonable alternatives.

As described in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS, funding for the floating bridge—the most vulnerable portion of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina corridor—has been secured, and WSDOT has solicited proposals for construction of this portion of the project. Chapter 1 also describes construction sequencing for the project, which allows several years for full funding to be obtained through a variety of state and federal sources. Thus, funding and construction of the Medina to SR 202 project does not preclude the Preferred Alternative or any other alternative for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project.